

Monument Avenue, 2700 Block
Richmond
Virginia

HABS No. VA-1306

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
PHOTOGRAPHS

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

MONUMENT AVENUE, 2700 BLOCK

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Location: 2700 block of Monument Avenue, between Mulberry Street and Boulevard,
Richmond, Virginia.

History and Description:

The 2700 block of Monument is the last section of the street before Boulevard, the largest street intersecting Monument Avenue. The equestrian statue of Stonewall Jackson stands in the center of this crossing. Designed by Richmond sculptor F. William Sievers, the statue was unveiled in October 1919. Boulevard cuts through Monument at an oblique angle, creating awkwardly shaped corners. On the north side, corner lots are not oriented to the intersection, while on the south side, the corner is simply part of the First Baptist Church grounds.

Originally the last section of the Branch estate, the 2700 block was subject to the Branch building and ownership covenants. The lot sizes between Mulberry and Boulevard on the north side now range in width from 36' to 94'; the south side is devoted entirely to the First Baptist Church. Like many blocks to the east on Monument Avenue, the houses here represent various attitudes toward urban street life, with an emphasis on more suburban examples at the western end. Unlike many blocks, the progression from east to west between Mulberry Street and Boulevard is fairly consistent, and divides nicely into chronological and stylistic sections, moving from 1908 at Mulberry to the late 1920s near Boulevard.

The houses at the eastern end of the block include two large-scale townhouses at Nos. 2702 and 2704, and a lower, wider house on the corner at No. 2700. Unlike most Monument Avenue houses, No. 2700 takes advantage of its corner lot with an enclosed side porch, a cornice line that wraps around the building, and the front dormer configuration repeated at the sides. Its symmetrical Georgian Revival facade includes two oriels, Palladian windows at the first floor, and three widely spaced dormers on a low hipped roof. Designed by William C. West, the house was built in 1908.

The town houses are both two-and-a-half stories with false mansard roofs, but sit on generous lots. Asbury and Whitehurst's design for No. 2704 uses familiar Colonial Revival details--including flared limestone jack arches, gabled dormers, and brick quoins--and emphasizes the width of the house with a full three-bay porch with balustrade. Although it has a typical town house roof, No. 2704 looks almost squat next to Nos. 2702 and 2708.

Rabbi Edward Calisch built his first of three homes on Monument Avenue at No. 2702. The building permit shows an estimated cost of \$13,000 in 1910. Although it has many of the usual Colonial Revival details, it breaks out of the town house mold with a tile roof, pressed-metal crenellated oriel, and a large Flemish gable with stone coping that makes the house look even taller than it is. Calisch moved up Monument from 406 Lombardy, on Stuart Circle, and stayed only a short time. In 1913 he sold the property to William P. Wood, a seed dealer. Calisch moved first to West Grace Street, then in 1915 to 1643 Monument. The Wood family owned No. 2702 until 1961.

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Separated by a side yard from the first three houses on the block are two D. Wiley Anderson-designed houses, a nearly matching pair at Nos. 2708 and 2710. On a grander scale than No. 2230, these use the same green tile and elaborate dormers for a Queen Anne-style effect at the roof. Both feature buff textured bricks, stone balustraded full-width porches with tile roofs, and limestone window detailing. Each house is 40' wide, and No. 2708 has an additional 50' side lot, which helps it read as a particularly long house and adds to the suburban quality of the block. Liquor dealer Arthur L. Straus bought a parcel of land from John P. Branch in 1912, agreeing to build not more than two houses, at least as expensive as the adjoining property to the east (No. 2704). In 1914, Straus hired architect Anderson and contractor R. W. Eubank to build No. 2708, at an estimated cost of \$30,000. Straus occupied the house until 1918, selling to Walter H. Miles, the president of W. H. Miles Shoe Company. The company's two vice presidents also lived on Monument Avenue, at Nos. 2911 and 2912. Miles lived at No. 2708 until his death; his heirs sold the house to Angus O. Swink, president of a life insurance company. Angus' widow Frances Swink sold the house in 1944.

The last three houses on the north side of the block--Nos. 2712, 2714 and 2716--read stylistically as a group, although their building dates range from 1917 to 1929. All have slate-covered roofs, three dormers, and spare Colonial Revival detailing. The cornice lines match on Nos. 2712 and 2714, while No. 2716 is slightly lower. Designed by William L. Bottomley and built last, No. 2714 is the largest of the three, with four bays, brick quoins, and an arched doorway (fig. 62). Architect Duncan Lee designed a house for J. J. Ballou, Jr., at No. 2712 in 1915-16, using three bays and large dormers for a boxy effect. Sitting on the northeast corner of Monument and Boulevard is No. 2716, designed by architect M. E. Wright and built in 1925. There is a one-story porch across the four-bay facade.

On the south side of Monument, at No. 2715, the First Baptist Church spreads across the block in a series of Classical Revival buildings. The main sanctuary is the most westerly building. Like its predecessor, the First Baptist Church at 302 N. 11th St., designed by Thomas U. Walter in 1841, the Monument Avenue church has a Doric portico *in antis* and triglyphs in the frieze. A breezeway with Ionic columns connects the sanctuary to the Sunday School building and with another, larger addition on the east, the complex forms the plan of an E.

The trustees of the church--Samuel P. Waddill, A. W. Patterson, Thomas C. Williams, Jr., Richard Gwathmey, Robert L. Powers, Lewis C. Boshier, and James L. Shepherd--acquired the land in 1920 in two parcels, from Lizzie E. Boyd and the Kingsland Land Corporation. Apparently, the Kingsland parcel originally belonged to Whitmell S. Forbes, whose mansion stood just west of Roseneath and who was also a church trustee. According to a church pamphlet, Forbes gave the land in memory of his mother, Jane Christian Boyd.¹ A temporary chapel was built on the grounds and used from 1920-28; ground was broken for the current building in 1927. The Sunday school and sanctuary were enlarged in 1941; the Monument Avenue facade was moved 30' toward the street. Later additions include the east wing and gymnasium, built after World War II. Considering the long construction timespan, the complex is remarkably consistent in style and materials.

¹Program for Sunday, December 19, 1928, First Baptist Church.

Sources of Information:

Richmond City Directories.

Richmond Building Permits: 696 (2700 Monument); 1428 (2702 Monument); 2388 (2704 Monument); 3252 (2708 Monument); 3607 (2710 Monument); 4553 (2712 Monument); 18768 (2714 Monument); 14556 (2716 Monument).

Deed books: **2702 Monument:** 243/712, 187/333, 60/1368, 713/1557, 693C/362, 605B/92, 557A/108, 434A/537, 224C/112, 199C/150, 176C/337; **1708 Monument:** 787/511, 690/754, 675D/131, 525A/127, 446C/268, 277A/227, 250A/311, 214A/463, 176C/337; **2715 Monument:** 246C/478, 264A/437.

"The Memorial Windows of the First Baptist Church." Brochure, 1949.

Project Information:

This documentation of Monument Avenue was undertaken in summer 1991 by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), a division of the National Park Service, Washington, D.C., under the general direction of Robert J. Kapsch, chief. The project was sponsored by the Monument Avenue Centennial Committee, Millie Jones and Ceci Amrhein, co-chairpersons, and Sylvia Summers, director of development. Funding was provided by the Historic Monument Avenue and Fan District Foundation, the City of Richmond, the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, the Historic Richmond Foundation, the F. M. Kirby Foundation, Inc., and the Robert G. Cabell III and Maude Morgan Cabell Foundation.

HABS senior historian Alison K. Hoagland directed the project and edited this historical report. Kathy Edwards (University of California at Berkeley) was the field supervisor; Esme Howard (Yale University) and Toni Prawl (University of Missouri) were the team historians. Jonathan C. Spodek, AIA, produced architectural drawings and Jack Boucher took the photographs. The team's work resulted in the publication Monument Avenue, of which the report on this one block forms only a small portion. Researchers are referred to that volume for more information.

For more information on 2714 Monument Ave., see HABS No. VA-1258.